

TRIBES OF LIFAN COUNTY

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In the grasslands among the Fan people, out of their nomadic mood of living grows the hospitable custom of playing host. In the wilderness of the grasslands there are neither inns nor hotels. Travellers in these regions have to depend upon the mercy of the local population for shelter and food. If a traveller once stayed in one tent, next time when he visits the place again he must stay with the same host. If not the host will be greatly offended, and the traveller will get himself into a bad way. The host family looks at the stranger as a member of the family, and they are very generous with chang-pa and milk. They seem to have a feeling of responsibility toward strangers who get into their midst. They feel it is up to them to feed the strangers. What they have is very little, but they are ready to share with others what they have. 574

E. SOCIAL CUSTOMS IN RELATION TO THE PLACE  
OF WOMEN IN THE COMMUNITY

The general impression of the tribal communities is the importance of women, and some people even say that the borderland is a woman's world, because women seem to dominate in everything there. But when one comes to examine the situation more closely, he finds the situation is quite different. In these mountainous and grassland areas, the natural environment is hard on people, living conditions are difficult, and the population is scanty. The result is that there is very little difference between the rich and the poor, and people are more democratic in spirit. Women, too, have to do their share in getting themselves and their families food. They have to work hard for their living. Therefore, women are as important as men in supporting the family. And where the Lama faith predominates, most men spend days and years in prayer and meditation, and dreaming about the future, and it becomes the lot of the women to see about the dirty work and the problems of the present. Women have to cultivate the land, or to attend to the cattle, or to rule the people, while their sons, grandsons, and even husbands are turning their prayer wheels and reading their scriptures. I do not think that they have ever thought that they are giving the women the more important place in society, nor do the women have any idea that they are working with freedom or equality. It is simply a question of necessity, because no people can live on prayers and scriptures alone. Thus without fighting for emancipation or equality, women are the pillars of society. 562

Among the tribal people there are as many women rulers as men. For instance, in the Black River the wife of the tribal leader at Lu-hwa 鹿花 is the ruler at Cho-o 錯窩. The wife of the tribal leader at Ma-o 麻窩 is ruler at Lung-pa 龍巴. In some cases the women leaders are doing a much better job than the men. The people do not seem to mind whether the ruler is a woman or a man, as long as he or she does the job well.

Not only among the ruling families, but even among the rank and file, the women seem to be the brains in all affairs. When you go into a home it is to

• 562 the woman you must state your problems or put your request. If you ask a man whether you can stay for the night, or if you are asking for water or fire, he simply looks at you and then turns to the woman. She is the man-of-affairs; the man's job is to smoke his pipe.

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591 Again, due to the hostile environment, not only is the population scanty, but the birth rate is low and the death rate high. Therefore, travelling in the mountain valleys in Lila, one often sees deserted homes due to the disappearing of families without heirs. In order to keep the family name from disappearing, there is the custom of Shang-men 上門. It's direct translation is "up the door". Its meaning is for a man to marry into a woman's home and inherit the family property with the understanding that the children must be named after the mother's family. But as this custom works out many men who go out trading in other regions will marry into a family and live there for one or two years, and then return home to his first family, and later on he'll shuttle back and forth with a home at both ends to meet his convenience. He has almost no responsibility towards either family, but privileges in both. Some men have even three families, and when the wives discover this they do not seem to mind.

When we went to Lung-hai 龍海 for the investigation of iron ore there, the district leader, Lo 羅, who acted as our guide, told us that he once joined the church when Mr. Torrance was there. But since then he has married and has a large family. When we called on him at his home and congratulated him upon his success, he calmly said he had another family beyond the mountains which he has not seen for several years. Upon inquiry as to the reason, he simply said he had been married to a woman there when he went trading there as a young man. He has not been there for some years. It is a custom nobody thinks wrong or strange. I do not know whether you would call this as honor to women or not.

#### F. CUSTOMS IN RELATION TO RECREATION

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584 As we have already stated, the land is all in slopes, houses are scattered, and the roads are poor. Women are busy keeping the family fed. Men of the Ch'ang and Gie-rung communities help out by going into the mountains hunting or digging, or by carrying tea from Kwan-hsien 關縣 into the grasslands, while among the Fen people most of the men are busy at their prayer wheels and scriptures. One would think life is a worry and dreary job. But no, it is not so. The tribes people do everything with joy, even suffering poverty. Streams of vocal music ring out from the mountains. It is the custom to sing while working. Their loudness of singing out-of-doors almost corresponds to that of the Norwegians toward dancing on the mountains. When one person is singing the whole valley echoes back, and then someone hidden somewhere behind the rocks responds, and the mountain echoes back again. They are innocent, natural, and free from the restrictions of etiquette. In this way lovers talk to each other, and this is sometimes the prelude to marriage.

517 men sit and smoke and gossip, and the women spin yarn of hemp thread, make shoes or embroidery, or sew clothing.

527 During the first moon families invite friends and relatives  
[525] to a feast where they eat, smoke, talk, and drink wine. There is very little gambling. At this time people may amuse themselves by "playing lion," when two men covered by an imitation lion's skin dance about and fight with a man who always conquers the lion.

517 While working in the fields, tending their flocks, gathering wood or working in their homes, men and women talk and sing songs. When bringing home loads of wood or corn or some other produce they  
[562] may stop at a convenient resting-place and chat. There is considerable freedom between the sexes—that is, they visit and talk freely together, with comparatively little sexual irregularity.

535 At Chiu Tzu Tun in 1933 the writer witnessed a dance by  
171 twelve women and six men. The women were lined up on the right and the men on the left. First the men would sing a line of a song, dancing rhythmically, and waving their arms from side to side. Occasionally there was a slight, quick lowering of the body. There were graceful steps in unison, a swaying of the body, and a stamping of the feet. While singing each line each person turned around completely one time. It was both interesting and graceful. There was a jar of wine from which the performers drank through small bamboo tubes.  
[415] As the wine became low, fresh water was poured into the jar. The dance was led by a female relative of the local ruler. Since she was a Jia Rung, and the Jia Rung are very near, since the dance is lacking in other parts of the Ch'iang region, and since it very closely resembles the Jia Rung dance, it seems safe to assume that this dance was borrowed from the Jia Rung.

## 2. Engagements.

584 Sometimes through singing "Mountain songs" or otherwise a young man and a young woman become attached to each other and desire to get married. In that case they must request their parents to appoint middle men to make the necessary arrangements, and the consent of the two families must be obtained.

In Ch'iang engagements middle men are always necessary. Marriage is not an individual, but a family affair. Generally the young people are not given a choice, but the choice is made for them. A

11. A long naturally notched antelope horn. If a person has 778  
a pain in his eyes, hand, back or leg, the point of the horn is dug 755  
into the ground, the priest chants, water is poured onto the  
disturbed ground, and the demon is exorcised.

Small brass mirrors are sometimes also worn on the priest's 778  
ceremonial hat. Cowry shells have mysterious potency, and on the  
ceremonial hat add to the efficacy of the priest. Sometimes cowry  
shells are sewed onto the hats of babies to protect them from  
demons.

Some sacred implements found only in limited areas have been  
omitted

#### 6. Sacred ceremonies.

As has already been stated, most ceremonies in the home are 796  
performed by the head or by another member of the family. On  
special and important occasions the priest is called in. Friends  
and relatives may attend. Since women are considered to be [562]  
impure, they are not allowed to attend any ceremonies in the sacred  
groves, or on the housetops. Inside the home they must stand at a  
distance during the ceremonies.

Practically always there is a bloody sacrifice as a part of the  
ceremony. A goat, a cockerel, a yak, a "p'ien niu" or cow from the  
grasslands that seems to be half yak and half cow, or rarely a pig  
is offered. It is never a cow that has been used in plowing. The  
sacrifice is a gift to the deity, and the primary purpose is to make  
a contact with the god in order to secure his favor and help. In  
central Asia there is a widespread practice of presenting to an  
important person a gift as a means of securing his friendship and  
assistance, and it is generally expected and welcomed by the giver of  
the favors. This idea is transferred to the gods, with the result  
that before a favor is asked there is a ceremony of worship in which  
incense, candles, and spirit money are burnt, and gifts are made of  
wine, or pork, and the sacrificial animal is killed as a means of  
presenting it to the gods.

Mu Bya Sei and the other gods are righteous, and require good  
conduct on the part of their followers. Forgiveness of sins naturally  
is included in the list of favors sought, but that is far from the only

that the presence of these oddities and occult claims does not lessen our admiration for the better class of priests who despise the use of such fraudulent practices in their profession. They refuse to stoop to these mountebank tricks and schemes for the sake of gain but trust to the all-merciful power of a benign God to meet the ills and needs of men. To them God is very real.

793 Few priests to-day wear a distinctive dress. There used to be priestly sacrificial garments; there is one in the West China Union University Museum, which we procured for it. This one shows a kind of back-plate ornament which is peculiar. Of its significance we remain so far in entire ignorance and until we find a clue there is no use making a guess at it. Nowadays priests mostl. perform their sacrificial duties clad in the common white robe of the worshippers.

796 At the sacrifice in the grove only men are allowed to attend.  
793 Mixed worship is forbidden. Distance is no excuse, and nothing  
562 save bodily infirmity may deter the heads of households from being present. Worship is congregational and not to take part makes one a religious reprobate.

796 Elders or leaders of good repute are appointed in turns to see  
793 to all the necessary arrangements. It falls to them to select the  
ram or he-goat. This is done ten days ahead of time. It must  
[623] be perfect in every part, body, legs and horns. And it must be white. If a wholly white animal cannot be found, a white cock is offered to atone for any spot or imperfection in colour. It is led home the day before and washed. To augment its cleansing it is next bathed in incense which is of cypress twigs. Then it is tethered in a clean place until wanted.

A new and unused rope is used to lead it to the altar. The rope, too, has to pass through the sanctifying fumes of the incense, and afterwards it may not be used for any profane purpose. A special honour rests on the person chosen to lead the victim to the grove. He is always some one reckoned worthy among his brethren. It falls to him to slay the sacrifice, and he receives an extra portion of the divided meat.

Three days beforehand the worshippers cleanse their bodies, wash their clothes and make themselves ready. No pungent herbs such as garlic or onions may be eaten then or anything regarded as unclean. Even smoking is meantime prohibited.

[292] If possible, all go clothed in white. The very poor may wear dyed garments if they are cleansed and they have no other.

The road along which the victim is led to the grove only the worshippers may tread. No others that day may appear thereon, for that day it is sacred. Should any one inadvertently be met on it he must offer a special sacrifice to make amends for his trespass.

No outsiders are permitted to witness the New Year sacrifice. No Chiang even who are not participants are allowed near. The roads and approaches to the grove are carefully guarded against

342 Cloth strips about 1 1/2 meters wide are sewed onto the sides of the horizontal tent roof. These are fastened to shorter poles (in front about 1.80 meters, on the sides and in the rear about 1 meter) outside the tent walls in such a way that they slant outward like eaves. In this way the entire space enclosed by the tent wall is covered. Around the tent a number of longer and shorter poles and stakes are hewn into the ground in order to stretch the large horizontal middle section of the tent roof and the slanting sides. These posts are fastened to the cloth of the roof with strong ropes made of yak hair. The horizontal roof consists of two symmetrical halves that converge in a line at the center of the two longitudinal sides. These two halves of the tent roof can be pulled apart slightly to permit the smoke from the fireplace below to escape.

354 The fireplace is always in the exact center of the tent and divides  
342 it into two equal halves. It consists of a very primitive rectangular hearth made of loam, on the left side wall of which, as seen from the entrance, there are three fire holes. There are three corresponding round holes on top into which the cooking pots are set. The hearth does not extend from the front to the rear of one side; toward the rear it joins the place /20/ where the fuel is stored. The fuel consists of dried yak dung. In front of the hearth is the entrance to the tent. This is separated from the hearth by a wall about 2 meters wide, made of a piece of cloth stretched between special rods. Thus when one enters the tent one does not come directly into the main room but into a sort of anteroom formed by the cloth wall stretched out in front of the hearth. The person who enters is thus forced to turn right or left and therewith enters the left or right half of the tent, the two halves being sharply separated by the hearth and the adjacent area where the fuel is kept.

342 The side of the tent to the right of the entrance may be used only

562 by the men, the left side by the women. It is strictly forbidden to step across the hearth or the place where the fuel is stored. It is also considered very impolite to step over a person lying on the floor of the tent. Strangers, whether women or men, may under no circumstances enter the side not permissible to them. The residents of the tent may themselves set foot on the forbidden half only if they are alone in the tent and are obliged to fetch something from the other side. The woman, however, may not be seated in the right half. The man goes over to the left side to sleep.

362 In the section to the right is the hearth with a type of very primitive "k'ang" (1), that is to say, two short tubular passages are

1. The living room of the North Chinese house has

The woman does not receive special callers. The Fantzu are equally<sup>846</sup> glad over the birth of a boy or a girl, because the girl can later bring an adopted son into the household. There are no festivals after a child is born; nor is there any kind of initiation ceremonies when<sup>862</sup> a youth reaches maturity.

Most of the work is done exclusively by the women. The men<sup>462</sup> pay each other visits - on horseback or on foot - and chat, the main subject of conversation being the choice of pasturelands. The young people are entrusted with the tending of the animals. The girls are also required to gather yak dung for fuel. This work is also done by the older women, but never by the men. The wives of the nomads never go out to work as do the wives of the sedentary Fantzu, because they are too busy taking care of the animals and the dairy.

The woman always has a decisive voice within the family, re-<sup>562</sup>  
gardless of whether her husband was adopted by her family or whether<sup>593</sup> she married into the family of her husband. In commercial deals, for example, the woman has the final decision; the man /73/ if possible asks her approval before concluding any business transaction. It can even happen that the woman beats her husband, but married couples also beat each other. Relatives cannot interfere in a marriage. If young married couples quarrel with their parents-in-law, they move into another tent. In other cases three generations live in one tent. There can be as many as 10 inhabitants of a tent, but the average number is four - parents and two children. If a couple cannot get along, the t'ou-mu<sup>1</sup> gives the verdict at the divorce proceed-<sup>586</sup> ings.

After the death of his wife, a man can remarry immediately,<sup>587</sup> provided he has the necessary means; a widow can also remarry at<sup>468</sup> once. Orphans are taken in by the grandparents, if possible, or by the nearest relatives. If his wife dies, a man keeps his children, provided the wife has married into his family. If a man dies who was adopted into the wife's family, the children remain with her family, even though the family of a widow should adopt a second husband for her. If the widow of an adopted husband marries into another family, the children of the first marriage remain in the maternal family.

If a man dies who was adopted as a son-in-law by a family, the latter tries to find a new husband for the widow and a new son-in-law as soon as possible. He then inherits the property of the first husband, but must also take over the duties of providing for the children of the first marriage. If the woman cannot soon marry

1[t'ou-mu = tribal chieftain -- Analyst]

(1) ANCESTOR WORSHIP

therefore falls naturally into two divisions, the public wor- 771  
ship of the gods, whether Buddhist or not, which is carried  
on at temples and shrines, and the private rites of Ancestor  
Worship, which are performed in the home or at the family  
tombs. A broad division between the part played by the two 77/  
sexes follows the same line of cleavage. The majority of the 562  
worshippers at temple festivals are women and girls; men  
though present, either do not perform acts of worship, or are  
in a small minority in doing so. On the other hand the rites  
of Ancestor Worship are carried on by the male members of  
the family. Women are not excluded from these ceremon-  
ies, and play a part in them, but the important rôle is as-  
signed to the men, and without their participation the rites  
could not be carried on.

It is not easy to determine whether, or to what extent 77/  
this division represents a difference in belief rather than a  
mere traditional division of functions. Confucian teaching,  
the old style Chinese education, was undoubtedly hostile to,  
or rather, contemptuous of, the other cults, which it regarded  
as superstitious. This attitude is maintained by the modern  
education, and in consequence the educated and partly  
educated men tend to ignore the gods, or leave their wor-  
ship to women. On the other hand all families make use of  
Buddhist monks and more or less Buddhist ceremonies for  
funerals, and on some other occasions. Old men of wealth  
are the best patrons of the temples and the most generous  
donors for restoration funds. Among the poorer classes the  
worship of the gods on occasions of specific need is in no  
way confined to women. It might be supposed that the over-  
whelming majority of women worshippers at the festival of  
Kuan Yin is due to the fact that this Bodhisatva is re-  
garded as a feminine deity, patron of mothers, Kuan Yin the  
giver of sons. It is natural that here the women should out-  
number the men. But the same majority of women worship-

## THE FAMILY AND THE HOME

may happily come after marriage, are not pre-determining <sup>584</sup>  
 reasons for a marriage. The wealthier families, moving with <sup>596</sup>  
 the times, are beginning to realise that education for girls  
 is not a mere waste of money, or a whim of some old  
 scholar to be indulged in favour of a favourite grand-  
 daughter, as was once the case. To-day a young man of good <sup>581</sup>  
 family expects that his wife shall be able to read and write <sup>562</sup>  
 and have some general education. Nevertheless the duty of a  
 wife is still to bear children, keep the home, and perhaps  
 help to run the shop. She may have her women friends,  
 usually drawn from relatives and in-laws, but there is little  
 social life shared by husband and wife. He goes out to see  
 his friends alone, or entertains them in his own home  
 without his wife being present, although among the more  
 advanced families he may present her to the guests before  
 the meal.

A newly married bride has little independence in her <sup>593</sup>  
 husband's home, for it is controlled by her mother-in-law,  
 or if she be already dead, by a sister-in-law senior to her-  
 self, or some other female relative of her husband's family.  
 Her happiness will depend on the character of these women,  
 for her husband has little to say in the home, and if she is  
 disliked by his mother, he can do nothing to alleviate her  
 lot. The best and most certain way of obtaining considera-  
 tion in the home is assured. Unfortunately the infant mor-  
 tality in a country where medical knowledge is slight and <sup>[165]</sup>  
 the services of a skilled doctor unobtainable, is naturally  
 very high. So much is this the case that no Min Chia will <sup>553</sup>  
 celebrate the birth of a child until it has lived at least a  
 month, and it is not given a name until it has survived a year.  
 Then indeed the family begin to feel that they have really  
 got a new member, and the important question of the name  
 is decided.

## THE FAMILY AND THE HOME

customary to adopt a nephew or a young cousin of a lower generation as heir. Widowers usually re-marry, and a widower is not considered to be an unsuitable bridegroom for a girl, but custom is opposed to the re-marriage of widows, who if they do so, can bring nothing but their own clothes to their new home, and must leave behind everything that they received from their dead husband. In spite of this, widows quite often do marry again, but only if they have no children of their own. 595  
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In spite of the real limitations and disabilities which women suffer under this system, they are far from being downtrodden and secluded. When a woman has given birth to children her position in the home is secured, and as she grows older her authority increases. When she becomes the head of the household, after her mother-in-law's death, she is the absolute mistress of the home. Men have very little control over the running of the house. They are not consulted even when it is a question of letting a part of the house to strangers, and the rent is paid to the mother, not the father or the eldest son. They may invite guests to dinner parties, and they can conduct the outside business of the family, though rarely without consulting their wives or mothers. It is often assumed that the hardship of these arranged marriages rests only on the bride, but for the husband, who finds himself married, for life in practice, to a termagant or a spitfire, the home becomes anything but a restful retreat. Many men in these circumstances find escape by engaging in business in some distant city, virtually leaving their homes in the possession of the unloved wife. 562  
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In western Yunnan modern medical science is still almost entirely unknown, and the ravages of epidemic diseases proceed virtually unchecked. The doctors who practise old-fashioned Chinese medicine are indeed capable 755

[165]

[i.e. the marriage system. -- Analyst]

## INVITATION TO THE FEAST

It is, perhaps, natural that in a country where the only <sup>484</sup> means of communication are walking or riding at a foot's <sup>562</sup> pace, and where in consequence everyone in the ordinary course of their business has to walk long distances, walking for exercise is not considered to be rational behaviour. For this reason excursions which have no definite aim in view are never made. Travel is looked upon, quite naturally in view of the conditions, as a hardship which should be avoided if possible, and only undertaken for urgent reasons of business. The Min Chia peasant who has his farm to work probably never goes more than a few miles from his native village in a lifetime. He would never go up the mountain unless it was to cut wood or fodder, and his visits to the city or places further off are only to attend the fortnightly fair or the country markets. Women travel even less. A few annual pilgrimages to the big festivals at temples, or short journeys to town for market days are all they are ever likely to do, and even the women of the wealthy class rarely if ever go to distant places. Their recreations are thus even more limited than those of the men, for they do not enjoy the same opportunities of feasting in a neighbour's house, except on great occasions such as a wedding. Yet wealthy though they may be they are not idle, for if a woman has few recreations she has many occupations. The care of numerous children, housework and cooking, take up most of the day, and in her spare time she has needlework and embroidery to pass the time. Few women read, for though they are taught sufficient characters in school to write letters or keep accounts, they have no time for reading as a pleasure. The peasant women, of course, for the most part still remain illiterate.